

AAZK Chapter Resource: Chapter Function Part 2 - Membership



Produced by the AAZK Resource Committee

This document was produced to help answer common questions faced by AAZK Chapters. The goal of this resource is to act as a guideline that completely and systematically answers common chapter questions with the understanding that all chapters are run differently. This information may serve as a companion, but not as an alternative, to the AAZK National Operations Manual.

This document was produced to provide examples (not all inclusive) of membership benefits provided by AAZK Chapters. Benefits that AAZK Chapters provide to their members vary, but all seek to promote professional development and to build a cohesive team. This document can be used to help recruit new chapter members and promote membership within the organization.

What is Included with a Local AAZK Chapter Membership? The Quick Points

Disclaimer: Membership should have its benefits, but never be exclusive. It's important to keep the needs of non-members in mind when planning events, fundraisers, or gatherings. An effective way to do this is by offering free or discounted entry for members. AAZK Chapters should always consider all qualifying non-members as potential future members, and offer them in as many member-like opportunities as possible to encourage interest in joining.

- Voting rights at chapter level
- Development of leadership skills by holding office of President, Vice- President, Secretary, and Treasurer on the Chapter Executive Team
 - The member must also be member of National AAZK to hold these positions
- Act as the organizer for events, fundraisers, conservation initiatives
 - Locally and Globally
- Opportunities for professional development and growth
 - Chapter run scholarships, workshops, and leadership positions
- Members only events or trips
- Network with like-minded individuals both in and outside of the place of employment, such as with staff of other zooquaria facilities or conservation organizations

Chapter Membership Benefits

Voting Rights

- Voting rights at the chapter level allow for equality and fairness among members
- Chapter members are entitled to one vote, provided they are an active member (i.e. have contributed dues for the year) ¹⁰
- Chapter members have the chance to vote on chapter activities, who acts as chapter officers, and the overall direction of the chapter

Leadership Opportunities

- Skills gained by members while acting as a chapter leader are transferable to current and future careers, professional functions and duties, and unassociated personal endeavors.
- Individuals can act as a local chapter leader by holding the office of President, Vice-President, Secretary, or Treasurer on the Chapter Executive Team
 - Term limits are determined by each Chapter's Bylaws ¹⁰
 - Some chapter's elected officers serve for two-year terms ¹
 - Chapters Officers need to be members in good standing with AAZK National ¹⁰
 - Only active chapter members are eligible to hold these positions ¹⁰
- Chapter Officers are chosen by members during routine elections ¹⁰



Internal and External Networking

- Networking builds relationships among members (both within and outside of a chapter) and grants opportunities to find outside resources
 - Utilize travel grants and scholarships to attend conferences and workshops, which all have many networking opportunities
 - Collaborate with other AAZK Chapters and members to exchange ideas
 - Monthly meetings provide an opportunity for members to share stories and experiences in an informal setting
 - Chapter membership can include other staff or volunteers from a facility that usually would not cross paths
 - Meetings provide an opportunity for members to connect

Participate in or Organize Conservation Based Events

- Members organizing events gain skills that can be used elsewhere in their personal and professional lives
 - Gain leadership and teamwork skills while planning and organizing with the support and guidance of a network of peers
- Participation in conservation based events can foster a feeling of contributing to the “bigger picture” while working locally
- Run events to raise awareness about specific species or environmental concerns or simple fundraisers to financially support conservation efforts
 - Example: Organize a Red Panda Day Celebration to educate about threats facing the species in the wild ¹
- Additionally, there are a variety of ways members can use their creativity to organize fundraisers for a conservation project they are passionate about
- There are many supportive resources from AAZK to help organize these events
 - By logging in to the members only section of www.aazk.org, resources are organized by subject
 - Organizing a Fundraiser document
 - Under the *Chapter Resources* tab, select *Chapter Operations*
 - Running a Bowling for Rhinos event
 - Under *Bowling for Rhinos Member Resources* tab, select “BFR - Holding an Event”

Participate in Local Conservation and Field Work

- Chapters can provide opportunities for members to be involved with local conservation and fieldwork, which can foster cooperation between chapters and local government/businesses/people while providing rewarding experiences for members.
 - Street clean-up and planting project. ⁴
 - Yearly beach clean-up event ¹
 - Plant/maintain pollinator garden on zoo grounds ¹

Professional Development of Chapter Members

- Professional development provides members a with a chance to grow in their career and develop new skill sets
- There are many ways to provide professional development opportunities to members
 - Scholarships for the AAZK Conference ²
 - Scholarships for travel to professional development or work-related travel (field work) ³
 - Hosting workshops or training events
 - Bring in guest speakers that can talk about global or local initiatives, animal training, or other topics of interest
 - Offer trainings or lectures from leaders with expertise, such as



- Resume & interview pointers ²
- Snake handling ⁴
- Members discuss workshops, conferences, or other experiences they've had
 - Presentations after chapter meetings on how travel funds were used and what the participants learned ⁴
 - Symposium style presentation by members who attended conferences, conservation opportunities or workshops ^{5,6}
 - Monthly "In-Depths" which can be hour-long, lunchtime seminars led by facility staff that take a closer look into specific conservation efforts, animal care, and the zoo keeping profession. ⁸

Chapter Member Recognition

- Always ensure the hard work of chapter members is recognized, which can help with membership retention and encourage future participation and contribution
- Utilizing a Point System
 - Points can be earned by attending meetings/events, helping to organize an event, serving on a committee, or helping at a fundraiser event ⁷
 - Points can be redeemed or used in the decision making process for professional development opportunities and associated costs ⁷
 - In Chapters in which members redeem points they've earned, they may be required to submit a written request to the Chapter
 - In Chapters in which points are used in selection of members for professional development opportunities, the membership may vote to allocate funds at chapter meetings
 - Member can present highlights of the event back to the chapter, if required
 - Members with the most points can be awarded small prizes such as gift cards to local restaurants/business or items with chapter logo ¹
- National Zoo Keeper Week (annually during the third full week in July) is a great platform to recognize members for their hard work.
 - Keeper Profiles online to highlight individual keepers and the work they do ⁴
 - Raffle off chapter memberships. ⁹
 - "Member of the Year" awarded with one year membership (usually a non-officer) with highest points or meeting/event attendance. ²

Chapter Member Only Activities and Social Events

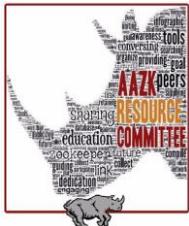
- Member only activities provide opportunities for informal socialization and can help build a fun atmosphere.
 - Activities such as enrichment nights and National Zoo Keeper Week
 - Restaurant nights or happy hour
 - Secret Santa Happy Hour ⁸
 - Trips to other zoos or parks
 - Keeper exchanges, in and out of house ⁴
 - Networking with local organizations
 - The Healthy Harbor Initiative ⁴
 - Field work outings
 - Osprey banding ⁴

Citations

1. Green Bay Chapter
2. Pittsburgh Chapter



3. Puget Sound Chapter
4. Greater Baltimore Chapter
5. Connecticut Chapter
6. Greater New Jersey Chapter
7. Greater Houston Chapter
8. National Capitol Chapter
9. St. Louis Chapter
10. AAZK Operations Manual



The AAZK Resource Committee's Chapter and Networking Resource Team is responsible for the content and production of this document.

For questions, clarification, or suggestions for future resources, contact: arc@aazk.org.



Insert Chapter Logo

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Insert Chapter Name

The following form is a template for AAZK Chapters to use to provide prospective and information for new members about the benefits included with membership to their Chapter. The following are examples and not meant to be all inclusive, benefits that AAZK Chapters provide to their members may vary.

Chapter Membership

Thanks for your interest in joining *insert chapter name*! The requirements for joining this local chapter (which differ from joining AAZK nationally) are:

- Paying annual dues of *insert dues fee*
- *Insert all other chapter membership requirements in list form*

Membership within the *insert chapter name here* Chapter of the American Association of Zoo Keepers (AAZK) includes the following:

1. Leadership Opportunities
 - Holding a position as *insert all officer, chair, and other chapter leadership positions*
 - Running events, such as *insert some past events*, or creating a new one that support the mission and goals of the chapter
 - Promote Zoo Keeper profession: *if applicable, list National Zoo keeper week activities*
2. Professional Development Opportunities
 - Scholarships for members: *if applicable, list available scholarships*
 - Workshops or trainings for members: *if applicable, list available workshops or trainings*
 - Member discussions or presentations: *if applicable, list examples*
 - Participate in local conservation or field work: *if applicable, list opportunities*
3. Networking Opportunities
 - Attend *enter number of meetings per year* meetings to collaborate with other chapter members
 - Attend member only outings or social events: *if applicable, list social events*
4. *Insert other specific members only benefit categories, such as discounted or free admission, unique networking opportunities, etc.*

